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May 21st, 2013

Hon. Hugh Flemming
Minister of Health
Government of New Brunswick
520 King Street
Fredericton, NB, E3B 6G3

CC: Premier Alward, Undergraduate Dean DMNB, Post-graduate Family Medicine Program Director (Dalhousie), Family Medicine Site Directors (Dalhousie), Head of Family Medicine (Saint John), New Brunswick Medical Society

Dear Minister,

As the Chief Residents for the 7 Dalhousie Family Medicine training programs based in the Maritimes (Saint John, Moncton, Fredericton, Halifax, Prince Edward Island, Annapolis Valley and Sydney) and the Sherbrooke Family Medicine program based in Moncton, we represent 141 Family Medicine Residents training in post-graduate programs here in the Maritimes. Collectively, we represent all of the Family Medicine residents from both Health Regions in New Brunswick, as well as many New Brunswickers training throughout the Maritimes who wish to return home to practice upon completion of training. We are writing to voice concerns that we all share regarding practice opportunities here in New Brunswick.

It has recently been communicated to us by the Head of Family Medicine in Saint John that there are limited practice opportunities for family medicine residents in this province upon completion of our training. This position was reiterated in a recent visit by the Vice President of Medical Affairs for Horizon NB. As I'm sure you are aware, billing numbers are restricted in our province by the government, a policy largely without precedent in Canada. The limited positions that are being made available are to take over established practices, or based in rural-remote areas. For many reasons, these are not desirable to most new practicing physicians.

Training in New Brunswick is a special opportunity. We have all forged ties within our communities, and many of us would like to stay and take up a practice of our choosing to provide medical service to the citizens that have subsidized our training through their tax dollars. The restrictions noted above make this endeavor extremely challenging. We doubt that we can effectively communicate to you the negative effect on morale this has brought upon us. Compounded with already meager and recently cut recruitment efforts by the province and Health Regions in NB, it has left potential physicians with strong ties to this area seriously considering other provinces to establish practice.

The roadblocks popping up for young physicians do not correspond to the patient needs in New Brunswick for doctors. We know that near you in Saint John, thousands of patients are without family doctors, but your government has just dismantled its urban recruitment incentives for new doctors. As you know, health care sustainability is aided by our provincial ability to offer patients a family doctor. Diagnosing and treating health care conditions early and effectively prevents unnecessary emergency room and walk-in clinic visits, both of which have been targeted in your recent print and online ad campaign.

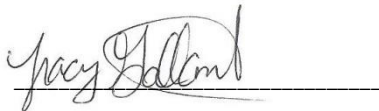
Minister, we have young and eager family physicians in this province who want to start practice and serve New Brunswickers but we are being discouraged by our government to do so. We believe that the thousands of New Brunswickers on waiting lists for Family Physicians deserve better. We as a group would like to see more opportunities to practice in New Brunswick, without limitations, such as being delegated to take over existing practices, or forced to practice in communities to which we have no ties. We consider these restrictions a disservice to our Medical School, our Medical Training Programs, and most importantly the residents and taxpayers of New Brunswick who stand to benefit from our tax-payer subsidized education. We believe that an enlightened public service would understand that working with physicians, removing a cap on patient care, and reversing cuts to recruitment incentives would increase the likelihood of physician recruitment and retention.

We eagerly await your reply,



Dr Robert Pomerleau

Associate Chief Resident, Saint John, NB



Dr Tracy Gallant

Associate Chief Resident, Saint John, NB



Dr Brenna VanTol

Associate Chief Resident, Fredericton, NB



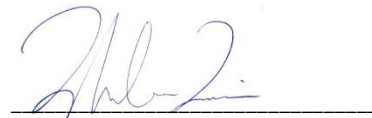
Dr Morgan MacKenzie

Associate Chief Resident, Moncton, NB



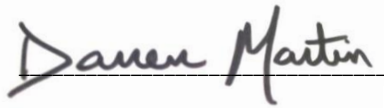
Dr Mariza Voges

Associate Chief Resident, Moncton, NB



Dr Ghislain Lavoie

Chief Resident, Moncton, NB, Sherbrooke FM



Dr Darren Martin

Chief Resident, Moncton, NB, Sherbrooke FM



Dr Jason Chan

Associate Chief Resident, PEI



Dr Rob Harris

Associate Chief Resident, Sydney, NS



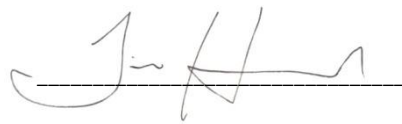
Dr Amanda MacDonald

Associate Chief Resident, Annapolis Valley, NS



Dr Kelly MacDonald

Associate Chief Resident, Halifax, NS



Dr Timothy Holland

Program Chief Resident, Halifax, NS